

Illinois Soybean Association

June 10, 2002

Mr. Denny Lundberg  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island  
ATTN: CEMVR-PM (Lundberg)  
Clock Tower Building  
P.O. Box 2004  
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004

Dear Mr. Lundberg:

On behalf of the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), I would like to thank the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for allowing us to comment on your draft interim report for the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway Navigation Study.

We feel it is absolutely imperative that the interim report endorses the modernization of the locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Waterways. More specifically, we believe new 1200' locks should be constructed at locks 20 through 25 on the Upper Mississippi River and the Peoria and LaGrange locks on the Illinois River. We also believe that your study should endorse 1200' guide wall extensions on Mississippi River locks 14 through 18. We think the US Army Corps of Engineers can design and build 1200' locks in an acceptable fashion that enhances the environment and habitat for fish and wildlife. Our ecosystem must be improved while modernizing the lock system on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers.

Last year American farmers set a record and over 1 billion bushels of soybeans were exported. Most of this was moved down the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers from leading soybean states like Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Our farmers depend on world markets and barge transportation is the most effective mode of transportation to move large amounts of soybeans and soybean products.

We applaud the Corps in looking at future world scenarios. It is a fact we have past 6 billion people living on Earth. The United Nations project by 2030 world population to pass 9 billion and could reach 12 billion by 2050. This explosion in growth means future trading partners for American farmers. An efficient and modern transportation system will be crucial to service the needs of consumers throughout the world.

Making the necessary upgrades to improve the Mississippi and Illinois Waterways would also protect jobs. Navigation on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers supports over 400,000 jobs. Roughly 90,000 of those happen to be high paying manufacturing jobs. However, one study estimates that more than 20,000 jobs could be lost if nothing is done to improve the current state of our locks and dams.

Another important aspect of a modernized lock and dam system is the environmental benefits it would produce. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), towboats emit 35-60 percent fewer pollutants than trains or trucks. Likewise, a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) study reveals that a gallon of diesel fuel in a towboat can push a ton of freight two and a half times farther than rail and nine times farther than a truck. Also noteworthy is the fact that an average tow and barge replaces more than 800 semi-trucks on our nation's already congested highway system.

This study must come to an end and construction needs to begin immediately. Now is the time to modernize our transportation infrastructure on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Waterways. This is a critically important issue to soybean farmers, and we sincerely hope that our comments are taken into consideration and are reflected in your final report.

Sincerely,

Brad Glenn  
President, Illinois Soybean Association  
Stanford, IL

**Responses to comments from Illinois Soybean Association.**

The full evaluation of ecosystem and navigation improvement measures will be accomplished as part of the feasibility study. Tentative plans will be completed by October 2003 and shared with the stakeholders and public. A final recommendation will then be determined and documented in the final feasibility report scheduled for completion in 2004.